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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0235
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1524
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 KUALA LUMPUR 001620

SIPDIS

STATE PASS USTR - WEISEL AND JENSEN
STATE PASS FEDERAL RESERVE AND EXIMBANK
STATE PASS FEDERAL RESERVE SAN FRANCISCO TCURRAN
USDOC FOR 4430/MAC/EAP/J.BAKER
TREASURY FOR OASIA AND IRS
GENEVA FOR USTR
SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREF](#) [KPAQ](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [XB](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: WOMEN'S ISSUES FUND GRANT PROPOSAL FOR BURMESE REFUGEE WOMEN IN MALAYSIA

REF: STATE 136319

11. Post recommends the following project for EAP/RSP Regional Women's Issues Fund Small Grants Program (SG) for Locally-based Organizations:

1A. Identifying Information:

a) Name of project: Independence and Voice for Burmese Refugees in Malaysia

b) Total budget requested: \$20,530

c) Duration: 12 months

d) Name of organization: Shelter for Women & Children, Malaysia

e) Organization Director:

Ms. Jane Kok

Born: Seremban, Malaysia; August 2, 1961

f) Organization Contact:

Mrs. Sharon Haines, Volunteer

Born: New Jersey, USA; January 8, 1969

g) Mailing Address: 376 Jalan Tun Razak

50400, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia

h) Phone Number: +6012-205-7563

i) Email: hainesfam92@yahoo.com

j) Organization History/Achievements:

Shelter for Women and Children (SWC) has worked for the past 3 years to provide housing, food and education for refugees who have fled Burma's military dictatorship. Malaysia has not signed the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and the government conducts frequent raids against them. For the refugee children there is no access to education or health care and little food. The center enlists volunteers including both refugee women and spouses within the diplomatic and expatriate community who attempt to provide essential services and supplies to the children.

Accomplishments to date include:

a) enlisting volunteers (both refugee women and ex-patriots living in the area);

b) establishing a community center/safe house which serves as a dormitory for ten women by night and as a classroom for the women and for approximately 100 children by day.

c) Engaging in local fund raising for school supplies, food, medical care and other basic expenses;

d) Providing basic instruction in handicraft work (cards, gift bags, some weaving) to enable the women to move toward economic self-sufficiency;

e) Providing basic instruction in keyboarding, spreadsheet management and Internet skills on personal computers (two have been donated to the center).

k) The Center received an award from the Kirby Foundation for school supplies. To date, no USG funding has been provided.

1B. Project Overview and Justification:

12. The women of Burma, particularly those from the Chin state, have lived their entire lives in desperation. Under Burma's military dictatorship they have been repressed as citizens and exploited as women. Many report stories of having been brutalized and subjected to systematic rape and forced labor. They were brave enough to find a way to escape with their children, but many were severely exploited and were sexually violated to make passage. Here in Malaysia as illegal immigrants, their living conditions are not much better. They cannot obtain work permits in Malaysia without demonstrating marketable skills, which most of the women lack. These women are desperate to provide housing and food for themselves and for their children. They may be forced to live in on the streets, or among large groups of refugees in the jungle or small apartments where they are vulnerable to rape and exploitation. In addition, many of these women long to become successful advocates for the rights of their families and countrymen in Burma, and to pass on their skills to other needy refugee women.

13. In order to reverse the current cycle of exploitation, these

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refugee women need to gain financial independence by learning marketable skills, thereby freeing them from their vulnerability to exploitation. Once the urgent need for survival is no longer their first priority, these refugee women will be able to shift their attention to helping others, including by passing on their marketable skills to other women facing the same plight and by voicing their political views in support of their friends and family who continue to be oppressed in their home country.

14. The first facet of the Independence and Voice for Burmese Refugees in Malaysia Project will be to provide the women and girls with marketable skills. These skills would be in three areas: English language, computer education, and handicrafts. The language of the world today is English, and having a command of the language, particularly in non-English speaking countries, is a skill in high demand. By providing training in Microsoft-based office programs, Burmese refugee women can demonstrate skills needed to get a work permit in Malaysia, get a job, and also use these skills to communicate their views. While the refugee women have had difficulty gaining employment with their limited skill set and legal status, they have taken to making handicrafts for sale at craft fairs and community events. By providing the women with materials and instruction to further enhance their crafting skills, these women will be able to become more self-sufficient.

15. Until the refugee women can become self-sufficient, they need shelter and food for survival. The second facet to the project is to provide funding to support the safe house for the next year while these women are focusing on developing their skills.

16. Once these women have the skills to become financially independent, they can shift their attention to the betterment of their people. They will need to gain a basic understanding of the rights others and governmental structures that are supportive of human rights. This understanding will allow them to formulate well-informed views for improving the situation in Burma. An effective way to do this would be to set up a website and email communication with others who are supporting this cause. The final phase of the project will be to assist the women in accessing materials for background knowledge and the establishment of a

website to begin their campaign.

I C. Project Goals/Objectives/Implementation Plan:

I7. Goals and Objectives:

- I1. Provide Burmese Refugee women with skills to enable them to seek legal employment and share with other women in the community.
- I2. Enable them to reach out to potential supporters for obtaining basic rights for their families and friends still living in Burma.
- I3. Keep the women safe from violence with a protected environment for learning while they work toward financial independence.

I8. Implementation Plan:

I1. Education and Skills Development

- a. English language: Enhance current English language curriculum with more concentrated focus on communication skills.
- b. Office Computer Skills-Enroll five women in classes teaching Microsoft Excel, Word and Power Point.
- c. Handicrafts-Enroll five women in classes teaching quilting and jewelry making techniques.
- d. Purchase 2 sewing machines to be used for quilting and three additional computers (two already have been donated).

I2. Increase Understanding of Human Rights:

- a. Introduce the women to books and Internet websites that will provide an understanding of human rights and governmental structures that support human rights.
- b. Work with them to create a website and email campaign to connect them to other individuals and organizations in support of their views.

I3. Support of safe house: Cover the expenses of the center for the next year until the women can achieve economic self-sufficiency.

I D. Measuring Effectiveness:

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I9. The project will enable the women to remain out of environments where they are vulnerable to further exploitation. They will have begun earning income from the skills they've developed and possibly obtained legal work permits for employment. They will have learned skills well enough to begin to teach others in their community. Additionally, they will have formulated views for the promotion of human rights within Burma and have established a communication network to convey these views.

I D. Budget:

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENTComputer Skills Training:Cost PP
in USD# of women Cost
Excel1505 750Word1505 750PowerPoint1505 750
Handicrafts Training:Quilting20051000Jewelry
Making20051000
Equipment: Computers (3)2000Sewing Machines (2) 600
Subtotal:6850
FOSTER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION#of months
Awareness Education100Email Campaign100Website
hs
Awareness Education
100
Email Campaign
100
Website
Set-up100Website monthly fee1512180
Subtotal:580FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCERent for
Shelter300123600Food for Shelter500126000Utilities for

Shelter300123600

Subtotal:13200

Project total:

20530

IE. Resumes:

JANE KOK
46100 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Esan, Malaysia
H/P: 013-217-1165
kokjane@gmail.com

Work Experience:

Shelter for Women and Children, Malaysia
Chin Women's Organization, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Director (January, 2004 to present)

Led teaching and fund raising activities within with Burmese Refugee community in conjunction with the efforts of the UNHCR, as well as overseeing overall health and well being of this community.

Self-Employed Tutor
Teaching English language, reading, literacy and numeracy to children aged 5-18.

Full Gospel Assembly, Kuala Lumpur
Church Staff

Mentor to University and College Students, helping them to make good life choices.

Kuala Lumpur Alice Smith School
Teacher
umpur Alice Smith School
Teacher
Worked with children ages 5-6 to help them develop age appropriate skills in reading, writing and maths.

SHARON HAINES
376 Jalan Tun Razak
Kuala Lumpur, 50400
H/P: 012-205-7563
hainesfam92@yahoo.com

Work Experience:

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Shelter for Women and Children, Malaysia
Chin Women's Organization, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Senior Volunteer (January, 2006 to present)

VISA USA, Inc., San Francisco, CA
Vice President, Merchant Relations (October, 2005 to June, 2006)
-- Lead a team of three Sales Directors to reach personal and corporate goals for increased volume and new acceptance of Visa cards for Bill Payment (Utilities, Insurance, Pay TV and Telecommunications).

Senior Sales Director (October 2003-October, 2005)
-- Identified trends in Bill Payment and Retail industries, then made recommendations to senior management for a modified approach to the marketplace.

Sales Director (August, 2001 - October, 2003)
-- Sold new products in support of corporate initiatives to top retailers which included the number one players in the Supermarket, Drug and Office Supplies categories which added more than \$50 Million in new Visa Volume

Sales Manager (June, 2000-August 2001)
-- Delivered sales of new products, concepts, acceptance, and co-brand card issuance through expanding relationships with Visa's

Top 200 merchants

AIR PRODUCTS AND CHEMICALS, INC., Allentown, PA (January, 1998-June 2000)
Account Manager

Ici Americas, Inc. Wilmington, DE (April, 1995-January, 1998)
Sales and Marketing Representative - Developed and implemented global marketing and sales strategies for the plastic card market.

Rollins Environmental Services (Sales), Inc., Wilmington, DE
National Technical Representative (February, 1994-April, 1995)
Technical Representative (August, 1992-October, 1993)
Sales Agent (February, 1992- August, 1992)
Chemist (May, 1991 - February, 1992)

Education: The College of New Jersey (Trenton State College), BS in Biology, May 1991

KEITH